

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEALING UNUSED WELLS

By Mayor Gene Winstead

THE NATIONAL GROUND WATER Association recently recognized the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and well contractors for leading the nation in successfully sealing more than 205,000 unused wells in Minnesota. The MDH will be presented with the Outstanding Ground Water Award in Ground Water Protection this December.

Bloomington's Environmental Health Division is one of 10 delegated agencies in Minnesota whose staff conducts well construction and sealing inspections. Over 5,000 Bloomington wells, mostly residential, have been sealed since 1989. City records indicate that about 6,500 properties with City water service still have wells that are not sealed.

Why is it important to seal an unused well? Wells are direct conduits to groundwater. Properly functioning, a well will supply water from an aquifer as needed. Left unused or not maintained, a well may act like a drain

and become a source of groundwater contamination. Groundwater is the source of drinking water for three out of four Minnesotans. It is a resource worth protecting. In 2005, 78 percent of the water demand in Bloomington was supplied by the City's drinking water treatment plant that derives its source water from groundwater wells located in Bloomington.

Although not all properties in Bloomington have wells, some have more than one. At the time of sale, State law requires that well locations and status (in use, not in use, sealed) be properly disclosed. State law also requires unused wells to be permanently sealed, or repaired and put back into use. If in use, an annual well maintenance permit is required. Unused wells must be sealed by MDH-licensed well contractors.

State law prohibits building modifications that make an unsealed well less accessible for repairs or sealing.



For example, a well in a basement offset must first be sealed prior to constructing an addition.

For more information, call the City's Environmental Health Division at 952-563-8934.

CITY ORDINANCE EXPANDED

TOBACCO USE PROHIBITED WITHIN CITY-OWNED PARKS

TOBACCO USE IS NOW PROHIBITED within all City-owned parks, open spaces, conservation and recreation areas. The City Council passed the ordinance in October.

The new ordinance expands an ordinance implemented in 2001 that restricts tobacco use within selected City-owned park areas including the beach, pool, play areas and spectator areas during organized youth athletic events. The new ordinance, which took effect November 1, also prohibits tobacco use within playgrounds, play lots, athletic fields, all spectator areas, outdoor areas around Bloomington Ice Garden, golf courses, picnic areas, tennis courts and all other park facilities and



property. People may smoke in their personal vehicles in parking lots.

During the past five years, 88 Minnesota cities and four counties have passed policies and ordinances restricting tobacco use within parks and recreational areas. Cities such as Edina and Golden Valley have policies similar to Bloomington's ordinance prohibiting tobacco use in parks and on golf courses.

In 2005, the University of Minnesota conducted a study about public support for tobacco-free parks. Overall, 70 percent of those surveyed supported tobacco-free policies for outdoor park and recreation areas stating that the policy would:

- Reduce litter in park grounds.
- Discourage youth smoking.
- Allow park visitors to avoid secondhand smoke.
- Establish positive role models for youth.
- Promote community well-being.

For more information, call Public Health Administrator Karen Zeleznak at 952-563-8905.



I'M OUT OF SIGHT, NOT OUT OF MIND.

If only the pipes running below our streets could talk. They might remind us that they carry the very lifeblood of our community. Tap water keeps us healthy, fights fires, supports our economy and provides us with the high quality of life we enjoy. Our water bills keep that pipe system strong and reliable. For more information, call 952-563-4905 or visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Water treatment.



SAFE FROM THE FAUCET

SUPPORT FOR THE ECONOMY

A SAFE, RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY IS CENTRAL TO OUR COMMUNITY'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS.

- Tap water is critical to the day-to-day operations of existing businesses and to the viability of new commercial enterprises or residential developments.
- From foods and beverages to toothpastes and perfumes, water is the primary ingredient in hundreds of thousands of everyday products.
- Businesses must take into consideration the availability and quality of water when determining where to locate their offices or manufacturing facilities.



ON TAP NEXT ISSUE:
Tap water is central to our everyday lives.

Presented in cooperation with



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